

REMARKS

This amendment is responsive to the Office Action of June 26, 2006. Claims 1-12 were pending in the application. Claim 13 had previously been canceled in response to a restriction requirement.

Claims 1-9, and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Markus (U.S. 5,561,841). This rejection is overcome for the following reasons.

Claims 10 and 12 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims (Office Action, page 4).

Applicant does not acquiesce in the rejection of Applicant's claims based on Markus, but has decided to expedite issuance by amending the claims to include the allowable subject matter that was found by the Examiner. Applicant hereby expressly reserves its rights to pursue the canceled claims or other claims by way of a continuing application or the like.

Accordingly, Applicant has canceled claim 1, by way of this amendment, without prejudice or disclaimer.

Accordingly, Applicant has amended independent claim 2 to include the limitations of claim 9 and allowable claim 10 which was dependent from claim 2 through claim 9, thereby rendering independent claim 2 allowable. Claims 3-8, dependent from currently amended claim 2, are also allowable at least because they depend from allowable base claim 2.

Accordingly, Applicant has also re-written claim 11 in independent form, including the limitations of allowable claim 12, thereby rendering claim 11 allowable. Applicant has added new dependent claims 14-19, dependent from currently-amended claim 11, claims 14-19 tracking dependent claims 3-8 respectively. Claims 14-19 are likewise allowable at least because they depend from allowable base claim 11.

Accordingly, claims 2-8, 11 and 14-19 are pending in this application and are allowable for reasons given above.

CONCLUSION

Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested in view of the amendments and remarks made hereinabove.

If any fee is due beyond that authorized in other papers accompanying this Reply, please charge our Deposit Account No. 07-2347, under Order No. 99-890 from which the undersigned is authorized to draw. To the extent necessary, a petition for extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 is hereby made, the fee for which should be charged to the aforementioned account.

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Respectfully submitted,

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